Andover’s most famous song, “The Royal Blue,” was written in 1923 by Richmond Knapp Fletcher, Class of 1904. Although Andover had many other fight songs, this was immediately the most popular, summoning Andover’s legions to defeat Exeter (“the broken line of Red and Gray”). The Andover/Exeter athletic rivalry dates to 1878, Andover’s centennial year. In May 1878, the two schools faced off in baseball: Exeter beat Andover 12 to 1. That November the first Andover/Exeter football game was played. Under the rules of the day, Andover made five touchdowns and one goal; Exeter did not score. In a piece printed in the program for the 1948 Andover/Exeter football game, Andover’s newly inaugurated headmaster, John Mason Kemper, observed, “I am impressed with the fact that the long rivalry between our two schools has, perhaps, been largely responsible for the greatness of each. Competition is the American way of stimulating progress and improving performance, and one wonders whether either Exeter or Andover would have come so far without the other close upon its heels.”

Andover’s legions her ancient foe defy.
Over the hilltop a war song is ringing.
Shoulder to shoulder we back the fighting crew,
Hail to the Royal Blue!

(refrain)
Let’s go! The team is on the way,
Over the field there’s a blue wave rolling.
That broken line of Red and Gray
Once more we’re backward bowling.
Send our battle cry afar
As the Andover charge goes through.
And cheer for the glorious standard,
Victorious Royal Blue!

PH—IL—LI—PS,
Andover,Andover,
Onward to the goal!
(refrain)